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INCOMING TELEGRAM

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 3664

E.O. 12065: GDS 5/15/86 (LAWRENCE LOREN) OR-M
TAGS: ECON, PINT, PINS
SUBJECT: SOME REFLECTIONS ON ELECTION VIOLENCE

REF: KINGSTON 3105

1. C-ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: POLITICAL VIOLENCE IS EXPECTED TO HIT ITS FIRST HIGH POINT DURING THE COMING ENUMERATION PROCESS. WHILE SUPPORTERS OF BOTH PARTIES ARE INVOLVED, WE BELIEVE THE MAIN EFFORT WILL BE FROM THE PNP TO KEEP JLP SUPPORTERS FROM REGISTERING AND VOTING WHILE PROTECTING PNP SUPPORTERS. DEATHS, INJURIES AND DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY WILL CONSTITUTE SERIOUS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. THE VIOLENCE COULD ALSO REDUCE THE OPPOSITIONS' CHANCES FOR VICTORY AND COMPLETELY DISTORT THE INTENT OF THE VOTERS. AS RECOMMENDED IN THE REFTEL THE IAHRC OR OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH SIDES ACTING AS OBSERVERS COULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF REDUCING THE VIOLENCE AND SHOULD BE PURSUED. END SUMMARY.

3. THERE IS SOME SPECULATION HERE ON WHETHER THERE WILL BE AN ELECTION BETWEEN JULY 1980 THE EARLIEST DATE MENTIONED BY BOTH PARTIES, AND MARCH 1982 THE TIME BY WHICH AN ELECTION WILL BE MANDATORY UNDER THE JAMAICAN CONSTITUTION. MOST JAMAICANS HOWEVER SEEM TO BE TAKING IT FOR GRANTED THAT THERE WILL BE. UNDER THE CONSITUTION, THE PRESENT PARLIAMENT WILL AUTOMATICALLY BE DISSOLVED IN DECEMBER 1981. UNLESS THE GOVERNOR GENERAL ACTING ON THE ADVICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER WILL ANNOUNCE "NOMINATION DAY" AND THE ELECTION WILL FOLLOW BETWEEN 21 DAYS AND THREE MONTHS ON A DATE ALSO CHOSEN BY THE PRIME MINISTER.

4. SOME OF THOSE WHO ARE CONVINCED THAT THE FAR LEFT IN THE PNP DOES NOT WANT AN ELECTION BECAUSE THEY ARE SURE TO LOSE IT ALSO BELIEVE THAT THE FAR LEFT WILL MOVE TO TAKE OVER THE GOVERNMENT AND TRANSFORM JAMAICA INTO A ONE PARTY STATE RATHER THAN LOSE POWER THIS WAY. AT THIS STAGE FORCES OPPOSED TO SUCH UNCONSTITUTIONAL BEHAVIOR APPEAR TO US TTO STRONG. THEY INCLUDE THE GREAT MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION WHO, ACCORDING TO THE POLLSTERS, WANT A CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT, THE SECURITY FORCES, THE OPPOSITION, THE CHURCHES, THE TRADE UNIONS, THE PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS AND THE INDEPENDENT PRESS AMONG OTHERS. ALTHOUGH DEDICATED AUTHORITARIANS ACTING FROM THE WEAKNESS OF A MINORITY POSITION HAVE MANIPULATED POLITICAL STRUCTURES, PERSONALITIES AND SYMBOLS IN OTHER COUNTRIES AND SUCCESSFULLY IMPOSED THEMSELVES, THE LINEUP OF OPPONENTS IN JAMAICA SEEMS TOO FORMIDABLE FOR ASUCH A MANUVER AT THIS TIME. IT WOULD BE MORE LIKELY THAT ANY MOVE TO A ONE PARTY STATE WOULD COME AFTER A PNP MANIPULATED VICTORY AT THE POLLS. EVEN THEN THE STEP OF REJECTING MANLEY AS THE PARTY LEADER AND TAKING THE FINAL PLUNGE COULD TAKE SEVERAL YEARS AND FOLLOW A TRANSITION PERIOD IN WHICH THE OPPOSITION WOULD BE REDUCED TO IMPOTENCE BUT STILL EXIST FORMALLY.

5. A CONVINCING OPPOSITION VICTORY AT THE POLLS WILL REQUIRE, AMONG OTHER FACTORS, HEAVY VOTER TURN OUT ON ELECTION DAY. ALREADY MANY ARE SO CONCERNED AND AFRAID OF THE VIOLENCE THAT THEY HESITATE OR REFUSE TO GO AWAY FROM THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD UNLESS ABOLUTELY NECESSARY. IF THE POLITICAL GUNMEN CAN KEEP UP THEIR ACTIVITIES AGAINST SUPPORTERS OF THE OPPOSITION WHILE PROTECTING PNP SUPPORTERS, THE OPPOSITION VICOTRY COULD TURN INTO DEFEAT OR RESULT IN A MAJORITY SO SMALL AS TO MAKE IT EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR A NEW GOVERNMENT TO GOVERN. THEN THE ELECTION WILL HAVE BEEN A TRAVESTY. AUTOMATIC WEAPONS, USED IN THE GOLD STREET MASSACRES AND ON ONE OTHER RECENT OCCASION AGAINST THE POLICE, GIVE AN ADDED ADVANTAGE TO THEIR POSSESSORS THAT THEY CAN DOMINATE THE BATTLEGROUND WHEN THE OTHER SIDE HAS ONLY HAND GUNS AND SHOTGUNS. POLITICAL LEADERS INCLUDING SEAGA AND SHEARER. AS WELL AS THE POLICE COMMISSIONER, ARE EXPECTING THE FIRST WAVE OF VIOLENCE TO CREAST DURING THE COMING ENUMERATION PERIOD. PNP ACTIVITSTS AND GUNMEN, HAVE BEEN TRYING TO CLEAR OUT "ENEMY POCKETS" IN CONTROLLED AREAS. JLP SUPPORTERS HAVE COUNTERED BY BURNING A FEW HOUSES AND BY SCATTERED SHOOTINGS.

7. [redacted]

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LAWRENCE

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REVIEWED BY RB DATE 25 JUN 1982
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

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